

Message Text

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71

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 12686

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT VT PL

SUBJECT: OLSZOWSKI'S VATICAN VISIT

REF: ROME 12573 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. SENIOR POLISH PRELATE IN ROMAN CURIA INFORMED US NOV. 15 THAT ATMOSPHERICS OF OLSZOWSKI'S VISIT TO VATICAN DEFINITELY MORE CORDIAL THAN HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED, BUT HE DOUBTS ANY DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENTS IN VATICAN-GOP RELATIONS OR IN POLISH CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS ARE ANYWHERE IN SIGHT. A CASAROLI TRIP TO POLAND IN NEAR FUTURE CAN BE EXPECTED, HOWEVER. GIVEN CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI'S STRONG OPPOSITION TO ANY INSTITUTIONALIZED TIES BETWEEN GOP AND HOLY SEE, SOURCE SEES ABSOLUTELY NO POSSIBILITY THAT VATICAN WOULD MOVE ON THIS ISSUE OVER WYSZYNSKI'S HEAD. IN FACT, SOURCE QUITE CERTAIN VATICAN WILL TRY TO BE HELPFUL BUT WILL LEAVE INITIATIVE IN ALL DEALINGS WITH GOP IN HANDS OF POLISH EPISCOPATE. END SUMMARY.

1. SOURCE SAID POLISH HIERARCHY INTERESTED IN UPDATING CERTAIN ASPECTS OF 1956 "MODUS VIVENDI," PARTICULARLY QUESTIONS CONCERNING RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION, BUILDING OF NEW CHURCHES AND CHURCH PRESS. ALTHOUGH NUMBER OF POLISH PRELATES NOTED TO SOURCE AS LATE AS JUNE THAT POLISH STATE-CHURCH RELATIONS WERE WORSE
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THEY HAD SEEN IN YEARS, SOURCE FEELS SITUATION HAS IMPROVED OVER

SUMMER. CHURCH CONSTRUCTION HAS PICKED UP A BIT AND A BOOK BY CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI CONTAINING CONSIDERABLE CRITICISM OF POLITICAL SYSTEM HAS BEEN PRINTED. POLISH BISHOPS INSISTENT THAT ANY EFFORTS TO UPDATE "MODUS VIVENDI" BE CARRIED OUT EXCLUSIVELY IN BILATERAL TALKS BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND POLISH AUTHORITIES. BISHOPS, OF COURSE, WOULD WELCOME ANY PRESSURE CASAROLI OR VATICAN COULD BRING ON GOP, BUT ADAMANTLY OPPOSE ANY VATICAN OFFICIAL ACTING AS SPOKESMAN FOR POLISH CHURCH. SOURCE PREDICTED THAT NEGOTIATIONS TO IMPROVE "MODUS VIVENDI" CAN BE EXPECTED TO DRAG ON FOR AT LEAST A YEAR. SHOULD POLISH CHURCH OBTAIN ITS OBJECTIVES, SOURCE PREDICTED, IT MIGHT THEN BE MORE DISPOSED TO ESTABLISHMENT SOME SORT OF NON-DIPLOMATIC VATICAN MISSION IN POLAND, SUCH AS EXISTED IN YUGOSLAVIA BEFORE 1970.

2. IF IT COULD OBTAIN SOVIET APPROVAL, WHICH OF COURSE A MAJOR QUESTION MARK, GOP WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH HOLY SEE, SOURCE POINTED OUT. PRESENCE OF PAPAL NUNCIO IN WARSAW HOBNOBBING WITH POLISH OFFICIALS WOULD BE HANDY TOOL IN REGIME'S EFFORTS TO DRIVE WEDGE BETWEEN VATICAN AND POLISH CHURCH, TO DISADVANTAGE OF LATTER. IN THIS LIGHT MUST BE VIEWED RECENT OLSZOWSKI VISIT. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, POLISH PRESS SO FAR HANDLING OLSZOWSKI PAPAL AUDIENCE VERY CAREFULLY, STRESSING MAINLY THEIR DISCUSSIONS OF INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, BUT HE SUSPECTS THAT EFFORT WILL BE MADE THROUGH PARTY CELLS TO SPREAD IMPRESSION THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN GOP AND VATICAN EXCELLENT AND THAT ONLY POLISH BISHOPS OUT OF STEP. POLISH BISHOPS VISITING ROME CONSTANTLY EMPHASIZE TO VATICAN OFFICIALS THAT POLISH GOVERNMENT WISHES TO IMPROVE GOP-VATICAN RELATIONS ONLY TO WEAKEN CHURCH IN POLAND.

3. SOURCE SAID THAT OLSZOWSKI MOST CERTAINLY DID NOT RAISE QUESTION OF PAPAL VISIT TO POLAND. FOR HIS PART, POPE RECALLED WITH WARMNESS HIS YOUTHFUL STAY IN WARSAW, AND REPORTEDLY JESTED THAT AT HIS AGE TO RETURN TO ONE'S PAST WAS OUT OF QUESTION. OLSZOWSKI DID NOT RESPOND TO THIS HINT.

4. CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI ARRIVING ROME NOV. 20 AND IS EXPECTED TO WARN STRONGLY AGAINST ANY ILL-CONSIDERED IMPROVEMENTS IN VATICAN-GOP RELATIONS.

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5. COMMENT: SOURCE IS CONSIDERED ENTIRELY RELIABLE. ANY ADDITIONAL POINTS WE MIGHT OBTAIN FROM CASAROLI WILL BE REPORTED LATER. VOLPE

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